HOW MORTALITY AMONG WOUNDED IN THE RED ARMY IS REDUCED

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AS a result of immediate medical and surgical attention to wounded Red Army men at the front line and the use of blood transfusion, sulpha preparations, prophylactic and other measures, the mortality rate from wounds has decreased tremendously.

Over the past few years in particular the young doctors in Soviet Russia were trained to render not only ordinary aid to the wounded, but to give *immediately* surgical aid when necessary.

A group of American doctors visited, in October 1941, the famous Blood Transfusion Institute in Moscow, which receives from 700 to 1,000 donors daily, and were much impressed by its size and the scope of its work.

A great change has taken place in the rôle of medical work on the part of women physicians and Red Cross nurses and volunteers. While in the Russian-Finnish War, in the winter of 1939-1940, the work of women was confined almost entirely to hospitals, today they are right on the front with the men, ready to render first aid immediately when fighters are wounded. The idea of treating wounds with sulpha drugs, originated in America, was put into actual practice in the Soviet Union. This treatment, coupled with the application of plaster casts immediately as soon as the Red Army man is brought off the battlefield with a broken bone, and blood transfusion given at the front, right on the spot, are contributing factors in a tremendous reduction of the mortality rate among the wounded in the Red Army; but they render the work of doctors on the front much more dangerous than in the past wars, and, as a result, many of the doctors are giving their lives in this war. As stated in a recent interview with Professor Spassokukotsky, world-famous surgeon, veteran of three wars, in charge of the medical-surgical aid to the Red Army, it is to the honor of the medical profession, the fact that the doctors at the front die gloriously while rendering aid to the wounded fighters.

As a result of this splendid work of the medical personnel in the Red Army, statistics show a remarkable decrease in the mortality rate as a result of wounds. In the Finnish war, only 1.03 per cent of wounded Red Army men in the hospitals died. Statistics compiled up to October, 1941, in the present war show that 1.04 per cent of the wounded die. The reason for this slight increase is due to the fact that, while in the Finnish war of 1939-1940 most wounds were caused by bullets, in the present war they are mainly from mine splinters and are much more serious.

Another contributing factor to the comparatively low death rate from wounds is the fact that the soldiers are warmly dressed, well fed, and are evacuated from the front in special cars which are equipped with everything to make them comfortable. There are practically no deaths from tetanus, which took such a large toll in the World War I, when the antitetanus injections were given only after the soldier was wounded, often when it was already too late to save his life. Whereas, now, every Red Army man is vaccinated against tetanus before he is sent to the front. There are practically no contagious diseases in the army: no cases of typhus which in past wars was considered inevitable, and practically no cases of typhoid or dysentery—all this is due to the proper diet of the Red Army men, to prophylactic measures and high standards of sanitation in the army.

The above-mentioned surgeon-in-chief of the Red Army, Doctor Spassokukotsky, introduced the use of ammonia solution instead of soap for washing the hands before an operation and puncturing, instead of operating, a brain abscess as a complication of head wound. The same proposal was recently made in America by Doctor Dandy.

610 South Broadway.

A HIGH ENEMA: A MINING CAMP EXPERIENCE*

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REPORT OF A CASE

IT was in the early fall of 1901 that, while following my chosen profession in the mining district of Calaveras County, I received a call, "To come just as quickly as God would let," to see a woman who was expected to be dying of terrible cramps in a wood camp about ten miles from the mine where I was located. The messenger came on horseback, it being before the days of barbed wire or other telephone service in the foothill country. His horse was lathered and exhausted, so on the trip back he rode with me and led the almost spent animal.

When at least a quarter of a mile from the camp, a woman's piercing screams, frequently repeated, led me to believe that any human being with the strength behind such shrieks was far from a dying condition.

On arriving at the camp, where several families abode in tents under big oak trees, great high-wheeled wood wagons were standing about, horses hitched to picket lines, all typical of the wood camps of that day. The campers cooked and ate outdoors, sleeping in tents, with plenty of straw in place of mattresses. A whole family would occupy one end of the tent as a bed.

The men were bearded and muscular specimens, being able to produce many cords of four-foot wood each day, which was used by the mines to generate power.

* Letter from the author states:

Santa Rosa, California.

To the Editor:—Enclosed you will find a little medical story, which speaks for itself.

During forty-three years of very active medical practice out in the wilds, the mines, and in the cities, I have seen and experienced some very odd situations.

If you have any use for this little medical story you may use it. . . .

Yours very truly,
(Signed) W. C. Shipley, M. D.